

# Bacchylides 17: Singing and Usurping the Paean

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**B**ACCHYLIDES 17, a Cean commission performed on Delos, has been the subject of extensive study and is much admired for its narrative artistry, elegance, and excellence. The ode was classified as a dithyramb by the Alexandrians, but the *Du-Stil* address to Apollo in the closing lines renders this classification problematic and has rather baffled scholars. The solution to the thorny issue of the ode's generic taxonomy is not yet conclusive, and the dilemma paean/dithyramb is still alive.<sup>1</sup> In fact, scholars now are more inclined to place the poem somewhere in the middle, on the premise that in antiquity the boundaries between dithyramb and paean were not so clear-cut as we tend to believe.<sup>2</sup> Even though I am

<sup>1</sup> Paean: R. Merkelbach, "Der Theseus des Bakchylides," *ZPE* 12 (1973) 56–62; L. Käppel, *Paian: Studien zur Geschichte einer Gattung* (Berlin 1992) 156–158, 184–189; H. Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bakchylides* II (Leiden 1997) 167–168, and *Bacchylides. A Selection* (Cambridge 2004) 172–173; I. Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans* (Oxford 2001) 35–36, 73. Dithyramb: D. Gerber, "The Gifts of Aphrodite (Bacchylides 17.10)," *Phoenix* 19 (1965) 212–213; G. Pieper, "The Conflict of Character in Bacchylides 17," *TAPA* 103 (1972) 393–404. D. Schmidt, "Bacchylides 17: Paean or Dithyramb?" *Hermes* 118 (1990) 18–31, at 28–29, proposes that Ode 17 was actually an *hyporcheme*.

<sup>2</sup> B. Zimmermann, *Dithyrambos: Geschichte einer Gattung (Hypomnemata* 98 [1992]) 91–93, argues that Ode 17 was a dithyramb for Apollo; see also C. Calame, "Apollo in Delphi and in Delos: Poetic Performances between Paean and Dithyramb," in L. Athanassaki et al. (eds.), *Apolline Politics and Poetics* (Athens 2009) 169–197. C. C. Tsagalis, "Blurring the Boundaries: Dionysus, Apollo and Bacchylides 17," in *Apolline Politics* 199–215, detects in the poem a generic syncretism of Dionysian and Apolline features and proposes that Ode 17 constitutes a new performative genre type.

more inclined to classify the ode as a paean, because of the invocation to Delian Apollo and its theoric nature and performance context, I will attempt to demonstrate that it actually represents a specific type of paean which Athens was eager to promulgate as intrinsically Athenian. This was done, I argue, in an attempt to forge its hegemonic identity as the cultural leader of the Ionians in particular and the Greeks in general.

*The dating of the ode*

Theseus' killing of the Minotaur was widely known since Homer's time;<sup>3</sup> but in extant literature Ode 17 provides the first instance of the hero's dive and confrontation with Minos.<sup>4</sup> This raises a question about the story's 'traditionality': did Bacchylides invent it or did he recast and elaborate on an existing tradition? The first visual representation of Theseus' meeting with his step-mother Amphitrite occurs on a cup ascribed to Onesimos and dated around 500–490.<sup>5</sup> On the premise that art reproduces rather than invents new versions of myths, Maehler dated Ode 17 to the early 490s, taking the visual representation as the poem's terminus ante quem.<sup>6</sup> But the ode's Athenian orientation has led the majority of scholars to date the poem in the 470s when Ceos was a member of the Delian League, which was presided over by Athens.<sup>7</sup> As they

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* 11.321–325. The first visual representation dates to the early seventh century: Maehler, *Die Lieder* I.2 174–175, *Bacchylides* 173–174; S. Woodford, "Minotauros," *LIMC* VI.1 (1992) 579–580, nos. 1, 16, 33.

<sup>4</sup> For later references see Paus. 1.17.3 and Hyg. *Poet. astr.* 2.5.

<sup>5</sup> Louvre G 104; see A. H. Shapiro, "Theseus, Athens and Troizen," *AA* (1982) 291–297, at 293, fig. 2, and "Theseus: Aspects of the Hero in Archaic Greece," in D. Buitron-Oliver (ed.), *New Perspectives in Early Greek Art* (Washington 1991) 123–139, at 128, fig. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Maehler, *Die Lieder* I.2 170, *Bacchylides* 175. Contrast R. Scodel, "The Irony of Fate in Bacchylides 17," *Hermes* 112 (1984) 137–143, at 138, who points out that the clipped way in which Bacchylides treats some parts of the story is indicative of the myth's traditionality.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. A. Severyns, *Bacchylide, essai biographique* (Liège 1933) 58–59; Pieper, *TAPA* 103 (1972) 180–181; G. Ieranò, "Il ditirambo XVII di Bacchilide e le

rightly contend, the poem's emphasis on Theseus' parentage as the offspring of Poseidon,<sup>8</sup> the divine lord of the sea, and his symbolic overcoming of Minos, the human lord of the Aegean,<sup>9</sup> should be read through the filter of *Zeitgeist* considerations and seen as a politically charged attempt on the Ceans' behalf to appeal to Cimonian ideological uses of the Theseus myth and thereby to safeguard Athens' favour.<sup>10</sup> Fearn has defended this view even more strongly, laying particular emphasis upon the active involvement of Athens *per se* in the tailoring of the myth.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, one could argue that Ode 17 is actually the outcome of both Athens' attempt to ideologically enhance and legitimize its place in the Greek world in the post-

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feste apollinee di Delo," *QS* 30 (1989) 157–183, at 160 and n.16; Käppel, *Paian* 178–183; Zimmermann, *Dithyrambos* 93–94; C. D. P. van Oeveren, "Bacchylides Ode 17: Theseus and the Delian League," in I. L. Pfeijffer and S. R. Slings (eds.), *One Hundred Years of Bacchylides* (Amsterdam 1999) 31–42, at 39; D. Fearn, *Bacchylides. Politics, Performance, Poetic Tradition* (Oxford 2007) 242–244; B. Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods* (Oxford 2007) 88.

<sup>8</sup> As A. H. Shapiro points out, *Myth into Art* (London 1994) 121, it is difficult to dissociate this interest in Poseidon in both Bacchylides and vase-painting from the creation of the Delian League under Athens' leadership in the 470s. Cf. S. Mills, *Theseus, Tragedy, and the Athenian Empire* (Oxford 1997) 34–42.

<sup>9</sup> For Minos as the first thalassocrat see e.g. Hdt. 3.122, Thuc. 1.4.

<sup>10</sup> E. D. Francis, *Image and Idea in Fifth Century Greece* (London 1990) 62. See also G. Gieseckam, "The Portrayal of Minos in Bacchylides 17," in F. Cairns (ed.), *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar I* (Liverpool 1976) 237–252, at 243; Fearn, *Bacchylides* 244; J. P. Barron, "Bacchylides, Theseus and a Woolly Cloak," *BICS* 27 (1980) 1–8; D. Castriota, *Myth, Ethos, and Actuality: Official Art in Fifth-Century B.C. Athens* (Madison 1992) 58–63. Contrast Maehler, *Die Lieder* I.2 169–170 and 182–184, who associates the ode's subject-matter with the attempt by Peisistratus and his sons in the late sixth century to put Theseus on a par with Heracles.

<sup>11</sup> As he argues, Ode 17 should be read as "a document of Athenian cultural imperialism" (*Bacchylides* 242); see also Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods* 81–102, especially 88–94. Cf. C. Segal, "The Myth of Bacchylides 17: Heroic Quest and Heroic Identity," *Eranos* 77 (1979) 23–37, who prefers to read the ode outside its historical context, laying emphasis on its initiatory orientation.

Persian War period, and Ceos' willingness to play this propaganda game in order to secure its own interests.

In what follows, I set aside the avowed and undeniable political overtones of the poem (with regard to Athenian dominion over the Aegean) and rather concentrate on its cultural ramifications, even though the two are inextricably linked and cannot ultimately be separated. My main objective will be to scrutinize the ways in which Ode 17 serves to advance on the one hand Delos as the Ionians' (and the Greeks') cultural *omphalos* and on the other the Athenians as Apollo's favourite minstrels and legitimate ministers.

*Theseus' dive: the iconographical evidence and Ode 17*

In order to appreciate fully this highly politicised Cean ode, it is essential to survey first Bacchylides' treatment of the myth in conjunction with the extant iconographic evidence. In the cup of Onesimos, the oldest visual representation of Theseus' plunge, the tondo depicts Amphitrite bestowing a wreath on a youthful Theseus, who is supported on the hands of a small Triton. Between them stands Athena, whose presence underlines her role as Theseus' helper. The scene is completed with three tiny dolphins featured to the left. The episode of Theseus' dive is also depicted on a handful of vases of the first half of the fifth century. Contemporary with Ode 17 is a vase in New York ascribed to the Briseis Painter.<sup>12</sup> One side of the vase depicts Poseidon with his trident, three Nereids, and an enormous Triton ready either to escort Theseus back to the surface<sup>13</sup> or to take him to Amphitrite inside the halls.<sup>14</sup> The interior tondo features the authentication scene: Theseus is represented wearing the cloak bestowed on him by his step-mother and ready to receive the wreath she is holding. A contemporary

<sup>12</sup> New York 53.11.4. See Shapiro, *Myth into Art* 119–120, figs. 82–84, and in *New Perspectives* 129, fig. 8; J. M. Barringer, *Divine Escorts: Nereids in Archaic and Classical Art* (Ann Arbor 1995) 164.

<sup>13</sup> Shapiro, *Myth into Art* 119.

<sup>14</sup> Francis, *Image and Idea* 61.

adaptation of the same theme is also found on a red-figure column-crater in the Fogg Museum attributed to the Harrow Painter. Here the supernatural ambience of Bacchylides' underwater scene is replaced by a simple handshake between Poseidon and Theseus; beside them stands Amphitrite holding a wreath, Nereus, and a Nereid.<sup>15</sup> Theseus' underwater sojourn was also one of a trio of wall-paintings by Micon that decorated the Cimonian Theseion at Athens.<sup>16</sup>

Despite certain inconsistencies, which seem to imply that Theseus' dive originated during that period in order to advance particular political pursuits and aspirations,<sup>17</sup> the episode's visual renderings share a number of similar features. But the deviations of Bacchylides' treatment from the visual representations of Theseus' plunge are more striking and telling:

(a) Even though Bacchylides explicitly embeds the episode in

<sup>15</sup> Fogg Art Museum 1960.339. J. J. Pollitt, "Pots, Politics, and Personifications in Early Classical Athens," *Yale Univ. Art Gallery Bulletin* 40 (1987) 8–15, at 12, fig. 4; see also Shapiro, *Myth into Art* 121–122, fig. 85. The handshake between Poseidon and Theseus is also represented on a calyx-crater by the Syriskos Painter (Pollitt 12 and fig. 5), and on a jug by the Yale Oinochoe Painter (Pollitt 9 and fig. 2). For the motif see G. Davies, "The Significance of the Handshake Motif in Classical Funerary Art," *AJA* 894 (1985) 627–640; as he emphasizes, this gesture has several connotations and is often associated with parting, meeting, marriage, and death. For Davies, Theseus' handshake with Poseidon serves to indicate the hero's exalted status and divine nature (628). The episode of Theseus' plunge recurs in a much later (ca. 410) red-figure calyx-crater attributed to the Cadmus Painter (Bologna Museo Civico no. 303). Here Theseus is escorted by Triton to the depths of the sea and delivered to Amphitrite. Poseidon is depicted reclining on a couch, while an Eros is mixing wine in a crater. The scene is completed by several Nereids who, paradoxically, do not seem to pay any attention at all to Theseus' arrival: see Shapiro 122–123, fig. 86. Barringer, *Divine Escorts* 165–166, also mentions a red-figure amphora by the Copenhagen Painter in Zurich; here Amphitrite is depicted handing a red crown to Theseus, while Nereids are carrying fillets around her.

<sup>16</sup> Paus. 1.17.3. On the Theseion see Castriota, *Myth* 58–63.

<sup>17</sup> A. H. Shapiro, "Theseus in Kimonian Athens: The Iconography of Empire," *MeditHistRev* 7 (1992) 29–49, at 38–39. See also Francis, *Image and Idea* 61.

Theseus' Cretan adventure, none of the vases include symbols or visual hints which would lead the viewer to forge links between Theseus' dive and the journey to Crete.<sup>18</sup>

(b) Whereas Poseidon is typically assigned a prominent role in the iconographical evidence,<sup>19</sup> in Bacchylides he is conspicuously absent. To be precise, the god is named thrice before the plunge (36, 59, 79), but as soon as Theseus jumps into the sea, his name is left hanging and the poetic lens focuses instead on the Nereids and their extraordinary dance.

(c) Although Nereids do appear on all vases, their role is always secondary and limited to that of a spectator or bystander. More importantly, they are never depicted dancing, or even in a dancing mood. Bacchylides, by contrast, through some vivid strokes, transforms the Nereids from mere onlookers into an eye-catching spectacle.

(d) Minos' ring (κόσμος: 62, 95), which holds a central place in Bacchylides, is entirely absent from the iconographical evidence.<sup>20</sup>

(e) Another feature that stands out in Bacchylides' narrative, yet has not received adequate attention, is the dolphins that rescue the young Athenian hero and escort him quickly to the depths of the sea: φέρον δὲ {ἐν} δελφῖνες ἀλιναιέται μέγαν

<sup>18</sup> On this ground, Shapiro, *MeditHistRev* 7 (1992) 38–39, and *Myth into Art* 117, proposes that Bacchylides might in fact be the one who set the scene as part of Theseus' Cretan adventure in the first place.

<sup>19</sup> See Pollitt, *Yale Univ. Art Gallery Bulletin* 40 (1987) 8–15.

<sup>20</sup> Scodel, *Hermes* 112 (1984) 138 n.5, thinks that the ring cannot be Bacchylides' invention because of the light way in which it is treated. If that was the case, however, one would expect to find it featured on some vases. The only vase that may represent the ring is a mid-fifth-century vase found at Ruvo: Theseus is portrayed holding something like a box, which could be taken as a receptacle for the ring, though this interpretation is not very convincing; see A. H. Smith, "Illustrations to Bacchylides," *JHS* 18 (1898) 267–280, at 279 and fig. 9. The cloak that Amphitrite bestows on Theseus could also be Bacchylides' invention, considering that it does not feature on the cup of Onesimos; but see Scodel 138 n.5, who points out that if Theseus' dive was traditional, some kind of gift must have been involved.

θεῶς Θησέα πατρὸς ἰππίου δόμον (97–100). The three dolphins that appear in the tondo of the vase by Onesimos do not seem to function in the same way, for there it is Triton, on whose hands Theseus is depicted standing, who is most likely the hero's conveyor.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, *prima facie* the dolphins' cameo appearance might seem a fine, but insignificant, detail with no further implications, in so far as in antiquity dolphins were typically associated with Poseidon and the sea and were considered symbols of salvation.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, even though the poem does not specify Poseidon as their sender,<sup>23</sup> their presence in the scene is entirely justified and appropriate. Nonetheless, a glance at contemporary stories where dolphins feature in a similar context seems to indicate that their function in the poem might have been more subtle and intricate than is normally assumed.

*Dolphins ἐν χορῶ*

In a rich paper on dolphins in antiquity Csapo has shown that from very early on these creatures (along with Nereids) were considered to be symbolic dancers and were associated with choral dance in literature, iconography, cult, and myth.<sup>24</sup> The extant evidence is vast; here I would draw attention merely to two stories: that of the quasi-historical figure of Arion

<sup>21</sup> Triton is clearly Theseus' conveyor on the vase by the Briseis Painter as well.

<sup>22</sup> A number of stories of persons saved by dolphins were collected by Plut. in *De soll. an.* (*Mor.* 984–985). See also M. Bowra, "Arion and the Dolphin," *MusHelv* 20 (1963) 121–134, at 131–132.

<sup>23</sup> By contrast, the thunderbolt sent to Minos is explicitly described as a portent from Zeus. Also note the use of the adjective *hippios* (99), which associates Poseidon with horses rather than with dolphins; see R. Jebb, *Bacchylides* (Cambridge 1905) 386. Contrast R. Janko, "Poseidon Hippios in Bacch. 17," *CQ* 30 (1980) 257–259.

<sup>24</sup> E. Csapo, "The Dolphins of Dionysus," in E. Csapo and M. C. Miller (eds.), *Poetry, Theory, Praxis* (Oxford 2003) 69–98; see also F. Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet* (Princeton 1990) 115–122, figs. 88–94; S. Lonsdale, *Dance and Ritual Play in Greek Religion* (Baltimore 1993) 98.

in Herodotus<sup>25</sup> and that of Apollo Delphinios in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*.<sup>26</sup>

These two stories share a number of similar features: marine imagery (ship, sailors, leaping into/out of the sea), metamorphosis and epiphany of a god in the shape of a dolphin, human reactions of terror and awe. Moreover, not only are they linked with music and dance, but they are also etiological for the reformation and foundation of the dithyramb and the paean respectively. In the first story, the dolphin that rescues Arion, apparently a manifestation of Dionysus,<sup>27</sup> initiates him to the dithyramb and, as a result, Arion becomes a choral teacher and leader of dithyrambic song.<sup>28</sup> In Plutarch's version the movements of the dolphin that escorts Arion are explicitly

<sup>25</sup> Hdt. 1.23–24; Plut. *Mor.* 160E. Cf. Bowra, *MusHelv* 20 (1963) 121–134; V. Gray, “Herodotus’ Literary and Historical Method: Arion’s Story,” *AJP* 122 (2001) 11–28.

<sup>26</sup> *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* 388–546. On the poem see A. Miller, *From Delos to Delphi: A Literary Study of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 93 [1986]), esp. 91–110. The date of the hymn is quite difficult to determine. Scholars traditionally place it between the eighth and sixth century. Miller, who argues for the unity of the hymn, dates it to the seventh or early sixth century. Others maintain that the composite hymn was most likely sung in 523/2: e.g. R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns: Diachronic Development in Epic Diction* (Cambridge 1982) 113–114; W. Burkert, “Kynaihos, Polykrates and the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*,” in G. Bowersock et al. (eds.), *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies presented to Bernard M. W. Knox* (Berlin 1979) 53–62, esp. 54–58, and “The Making of Homer,” in D. Cairns (ed.), *Homer’s Iliad* (Cambridge 2001) 92–116, at 110.

<sup>27</sup> This conclusion can be reached retrospectively from Arion’s later relation to the dithyramb. It is also important that Dionysus was often linked with dolphins in antiquity, e.g. in the *Homeric Hymn to Bacchus*; see Csapo, in *Poetry* 76, 95.

<sup>28</sup> Herodotus claims that Arion “invented and named” the dithyramb (ποίησαντά τε καὶ ὀνομάσαντα). Given that there is a reference to the dithyramb already in Archilochus (fr.120 W.), it seems that Herodotus meant that Arion reformed and developed the dithyramb; see W. Ridgeway, *The Origin of Tragedy* (Cambridge 1910) 5; W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus I* (Oxford 1912) 63; Lonsdale, *Dance* 94.



linked with the form and character of dithyrambic dance.<sup>29</sup> The *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*, on the other hand, with Apollo's epiphany in the form of a dolphin, provides the etiology for both the god's oracle at Delphi and the establishment of the paean (the song of the Cretan παῖήονες)<sup>30</sup> as his cult song.

I would propose that the dolphins in Ode 17 function in a similar way, and that Bacchylides wanted his audience to construe them as epiphanic markers of Apollo Delphinios.<sup>31</sup> As I will argue, Bacchylides attempted to forge the links in a twofold way: by modeling his poem on the episode in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* (lexical/thematic similarities); and by capitalising on both the pragmatics of the performance and the fifth-century political milieu.

*Bacchylides 17 and the Homeric Hymn to Apollo*

In comparing Ode 17 and the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* it is easy to discern that, in addition to the dolphin(s), they also share a number of semantic and lexical features:

(a) Both stories unfold on a Cretan ship manned by Cretan sailors (but in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* the movement is centrifugal, from Crete to Delphi, whereas in Ode 17 centripetal, from Athens to Crete). Minos features in both poems; in Bacchylides he is one of the protagonists; in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* he is alluded to through the adjective Μινώϊος (Κρήτες ἀπὸ Κνωσοῦ Μι-

<sup>29</sup> Lonsdale, *Dance* 96–98.

<sup>30</sup> See G. Huxley, "Cretan *Paiaiones*," *GRBS* 16 (1975) 119–124.

<sup>31</sup> The association of Apollo Delphinios with dolphins has been disputed by some scholars; see e.g. F. Graf, "Apollon Delphinios," *MusHelv* 36 (1979) 2–22, at 2–7 (contrast his *Apollon* [London 2009] 109). However, the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* makes clear that the Greeks associated Apollo's epithet with δελφίς, the dolphin. For the maritime associations of Delphinios in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* see P. P. Bourboulis, *Apollo Delphinios* (Thessalonike 1949) 23–28; I. Malkin, "La fondation d'une colonie apollinienne: Delphes et l'hymne homérique à Apollon," in A. Jacquemin (ed.), *Delphes cent ans après la Grande Fouille* (*BCH* Suppl. 36 [2000]) 69–77; see also the evidence provided by Chr. Papadopoulou, *The Athenian Navy in Fifth-Century Athens: Evidence from Athenian Religion* (diss. Univ. London 2010) 51–54.

νώϊου, 393).

(b) The adjective *κυανόπρωρα* (“dark-prowed”), which Bacchylides ascribes to the tribute ship in the very first line, is also used to describe the Cretan ship in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* (406). Even though a regular homeric epithet for ships,<sup>32</sup> the word is undoubtedly invested with special value when taken in conjunction with (a).

(c) The dolphin(s) assume the role of the helmsman/conveyor, in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* steering the Cretan ship to Delphi and in Ode 17 transferring Theseus to the underwater halls of Poseidon.

(d) The notion of the dive is crucial and symbolic in the two poems. Burnett argued that both Theseus’ plunge in Ode 17 and Apollo’s dive in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* could be seen as examples of the primordial/cosmic dive, a widespread fairy-tale type encountered in many cultures.<sup>33</sup>

(e) In the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* Apollo first appears to the Cretans in the shape of a dolphin and then by assuming the form of a man “brisk and sturdy, in the prime of his youth” (*πρωθήβη*).<sup>34</sup> Likewise, in Ode 17 Apollo’s appearance is first evidenced by the dolphins and then by Theseus, who appears to function as the god’s avatar.<sup>35</sup>

(f) The gods’ epiphany is associated with light imagery and causes awe and immense fear in those who experience it.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Hom. Il.* 15.693, *Od.* 3.299

<sup>33</sup> A. Burnett, *The Art of Bacchylides* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1985) 34. Burnett is the only scholar who traces some similarities between the two poems, without, however, trying to provide a more systematic comparison.

<sup>34</sup> *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* 448–450. Cf. *Bacchyl.* 18.57, where Theseus is described as *πρωθήβος*.

<sup>35</sup> Fearn, *Bacchylides* 255. Also note the use of *θαῦμα* (123), which serves as an epiphanic marker.

<sup>36</sup> Especially *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* 440–447 and *Bacchyl.* 17.101–107, 124. On light imagery in Bacchylides see Pieper, *TAPA* 103 (1972) 400–404. Light had been closely associated with divine epiphany since Homer: B. C. Dietrich, “Divine Epiphanies in Homer,” *Numen* 30 (1983) 53–79; S. Con-

(g) Last but not least, both stories end with the singing of a paean. In the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* it is sung by the Cretan sailors while Apollo, taking the role of the *choregos*, accompanies them on the lyre. In Bacchylides the paean is sung by the Athenian lads and the role of the *choregos* is taken on (albeit implicitly) by the wreathed and finely dressed Theseus. Furthermore, in both poems paean-singing is preceded by female shrieks. In the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* the god's sudden manifestation and brilliance fill everybody with awe and lead the local women of Crisa to raise a cry (ὀλόλυξαν, 445–447).<sup>37</sup> This is exactly how the Athenian maidens in Bacchylides react when Theseus re-emerges from the sea amid a blaze of radiance (122–128):<sup>38</sup>

μόλ' ἀδίδαντος ἐξ ἄλός  
 θαῦμα πάντεσσι, λάμ-  
 πε δ' ἀμφὶ γυίοις θεῶν δῶρ', ἀγλαό-  
 θρονοὶ τε κοῦραι σὺν εὐ-  
 θυμῖαι νεοκτίτῳι  
 ὀλόλυξαν, ἔ-  
 κλαγεν δὲ πόντος·

One's first impulse might be to argue that the similarities identified above are merely coincidental and no more than

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stantinidou, "The Light Imagery of Divine Manifestation in Homer," in M. Christopoulos (eds.), *Light and Darkness in Ancient Greek Myth and Religion* (Lanham 2010) 91–109. See also Hes. *Sc.* 7–8 and *Theog.* 9, *Hymn.Hom.Cer.* 188–191 and 275–280, *Hymn.Hom.Ven.* 172–175; cf. the comments of N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1998) 207–209, 252, ad 188–211, 275.

<sup>37</sup> The only other instance of *ololyge* in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* is also occasioned by the god's presence. There the *ololyge* is raised by the superior goddesses (Amphitrite is explicitly mentioned) at Apollo's birth (94). On the *ololyge* and the paean see Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans* 18–23; C. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece* (Lanham 2001) 76–79.

<sup>38</sup> Text of Maehler, *Die Lieder*. Some contend that it is the Nereids who cry out: Jebb, *Bacchylides* 389–390; Burnett, *The Art of Bacchylides* 36; Francis, *Image and Idea* 61; Scodel, *Hermes* 112 (1984) 137; Barringer, *Divine Escorts* 164–165. Contrast D. Gerber, "Bacchylides 17.124–9," *ZPE* 49 (1982) 3–5; Maehler, *Bacchylides* 188. As will become clear below, Bacchylides is intentionally vague here.

literary commonplaces. Indeed, light imagery and paean-singing, even the dolphins, are by no means unique to the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* and often recur in Greek poetry. Moreover, it is true that compared to the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*, Ode 17 is far less detailed and elaborate. For instance, Bacchylides' references to the dolphins and the Athenians' paean-singing are quite compressed, limited to five and four lines respectively. In the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*, by contrast, the role of the dolphin spans forty lines, while the account of the paean-singing portrays Apollo as a *choregos* and specifies the instrument and the ritual cry (ἰηπατήρον' ᾄειδον, 517). Accordingly, even though the parallels identified above do bring the two poems closer, they are not enough to allow us to conclude that the audience would have seen the relationship, especially if we consider that the only explicit reference to Apollo in Ode 17 is the *epiclesis* at the closing prayer.

In order to comprehend and appreciate the true force of these affinities we should read them as an orchestrated whole. Only if we try to capture the finished tapestry, and not its individual threads, can we describe the impact that these similarities would have had upon the audience. We should also take into consideration the pragmatics of the ode, and, more particularly, the performative context and the target audience. Was the primary audience of the ode familiar with the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*? Was Apollo Delphinios important to them? Would this god's associations and sphere of influence justify his intervention in Theseus' plunge? Most significantly, was Apollo Delphinios associated with Theseus in any particular way?

Most critics agree that Ode 17 was probably performed during the Delia festival, in honour of Apollo Delios.<sup>39</sup> The highly elaborate and vivid depiction of the festival that we encounter in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* (146–164) suggests that it must have been one of the biggest and most prominent Ionian gatherings in the Greek world. Therefore, the audience of the

<sup>39</sup> See Ieranò, *QS* 30 (1989) 158–159; van Oeveren, in *One Hundred Years* 35–36; Maehler, *Bacchylides* 172–173.

ode must have consisted not only of Athenians but also of people from a wide range of Ionian cities and islands.<sup>40</sup> The strong Ionian colouring of the Delia is crucial for my argument because Apollo Delphinios held a central position in a number of Ionian cities and islands. His cult, which was closely associated with issues of citizenship,<sup>41</sup> was prominent in many of the cities which first joined the Delian League, such as Chios,<sup>42</sup> Erythrae,<sup>43</sup> and Miletus where he was also the patron god.<sup>44</sup> Bearing all this in mind, we can safely surmise that the great majority of the audience would be familiar with the *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* owing to their special relationship to Delphinios.<sup>45</sup>

The identification of the Delia as the occasion for the ode is significant for another reason. From the ancient collections of proverbs we learn that around 523/2 the tyrant Polycrates of Samos held a Delian-Pythian festival on Delos,<sup>46</sup> and it is be-

<sup>40</sup> As Chr. Constantakopoulou has shown, *The Dance of the Islands: Insularity, Networks, the Athenian Empire, and the Aegean World* (Oxford 2007) 38–39 and 57–58, the early cult network of Delian Apollo was primarily a *nesiotic* rather than a solely Ionian network. Nevertheless, the great emphasis that the *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* places upon the Ionian character of the festival is undeniable and should not be overlooked.

<sup>41</sup> See Graf, *MusHelv* 36 (1979) 2–12; V. B. Gorman, *Miletos, the Ornament of Ionia* (Ann Arbor 2001) 169–171 and n.11; Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans* 61; see also C. Sourvinou-Inwood, “What is *polis*-religion,” in O. Murray and S. Price (eds.), *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990) 295–322, at 309.

<sup>42</sup> M. H. Swindler, *Cretan Elements in the Cults and Ritual of Apollo* (Bryn Mawr 1913) 25 n.24, cites inscriptions and literary evidence from Chios; see also J. Boardman, “Delphinion in Chios,” *BSA* 51 (1956) 41–54.

<sup>43</sup> Graf, *MusHelv* 36 (1979) 3–4.

<sup>44</sup> See Gorman, *Miletos* 168–186; A. Herda, “How to Run a State Cult: The Organisation of the Cult of Apollo Delphinios in Miletos,” in J. Wallenstein and M. Hayson (eds.), *Current Approaches to Religion in Ancient Greece* (Athens 2011) 57–93.

<sup>45</sup> The *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* must have been widely known in antiquity; Thucydides quotes from it (3.104) and it certainly was known to Callimachus.

<sup>46</sup> Zenob. 6.15 (*Corp. Paroem. Gr.* I 165–166); see Burkert, in *Arktouros* 59 n.31.

lieved that the two initially separated parts of the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* (Delian and Pythian) were combined for that very occasion.<sup>47</sup> Whereas there is no hard evidence that this was a repeated practice, that remains a possibility (albeit a slight one). In fact, if we are to give credence to tradition, after the festival of Polycrates the newly combined *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* was actually inscribed on a whitened tablet for public view on Delos.<sup>48</sup>

Let us turn to the significance of Apollo Delphinios for Athens and his relation, if any, to Theseus. Whereas there is still much vagueness regarding the cult of Delphinios in Athens, it is certain that the god held a special place in Athenian myth and, more particularly, in Theseus' biography.<sup>49</sup> The god's temple, the Delphinion, was south-east of the Acropolis; and there too stood the homonymous law-court, which tried killers who claimed that their acts had been committed lawfully.<sup>50</sup> Photius cites two different traditions regarding the establishment of the court: that it was founded by Aegeus himself; and that it was initially established as a temple by Cretan sailors and was then transformed into a law-court.<sup>51</sup> According to Pollux (8.119) the first man who claimed justified homicide at the Delphinion was Theseus, and Photius (1522) informs us that his claim concerned the murders of Sciron, Sinis, Procrustes, and the Pallantidae. Most importantly, the Delphinion

<sup>47</sup> See Janko, *Homer* 113–114; Burkert, in *Arktouros* esp. 54–58 and in *Homer's Iliad* 110.

<sup>48</sup> *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* 18 (351 West).

<sup>49</sup> As A. H. Shapiro remarks, *Art and Cult Under the Tyrants in Athens* (Mainz 1989) 61, Theseus is connected to the temple of Delphinios more than any other Athenian site. See also Bourboulis, *Apollo Delphinios* 38–43.

<sup>50</sup> Dem. 23.74; Arist. *Ath.Pol.* 57.3; Andoc. 1.78; Phot. *Lex.* E 1521 s.v. ἐπὶ Δελφινίῳ. Cf. D. M. MacDowell, *Homicide Law in the Age of the Orators* (Manchester 1963) 71–81.

<sup>51</sup> Phot. *Lex.* E 1522. On the second tradition see below. Paus. 1.19.1 recounts an incident that took place at the newly-built temple of Delphinios upon Theseus' arrival at Athens. Also associated with Apollo Delphinios was Theseus' capture of the bull of Marathon: Plut. *Thes.* 14.1.

was held to be the place where Aegeus recognized Theseus as his son from the sword he was holding and which he had hidden, together with a pair of sandals, under a rock in Troezen as a token of recognition (Plut. *Thes.* 12.3-6).

As Parker remarks, the choice of the Delphinion as the venue for the scene of recognition can scarcely have been coincidental, in so far as the Athenian temple of Delphinios was closely tied to questions of citizenship and legitimacy, and was “the place where youths revealed who they were and what.”<sup>52</sup> Two such instances, where a boy’s legitimacy was vouched for before arbitrators at the Delphinion, are reported by the orators.<sup>53</sup> This is a significant detail, as the association of Delphinios with issues of legitimacy and citizenship (an association which he also had in other Ionian cities) would have served as a facilitating mechanism, encouraging the audience of Ode 17 to link the dolphins with him, considering that Theseus jumps overboard in order to confirm his parentage as son of Poseidon. Finally, Plutarch says that in preparation for his journey to Crete Theseus offered the suppliant’s branch at the Delphinion. On his return to Athens after the successful killing of the Minotaur, the hero founded the Pyanopsia, a thanksgiving feast in honor of the god, thus acknowledging his gratitude for Delphinios’ assistance.<sup>54</sup>

Even though it is difficult to trace the exact origin of the

<sup>52</sup> R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society in Athens* (Oxford 2005) 436. See also Gorman, *Miletos* 169; A. Bierl, “Apollo in Greek Tragedy: Orestes and the God of Initiation,” in J. Solomon (ed.), *Apollo: Origins and Influences* (Tucson 1994) 81–96, at 87.

<sup>53</sup> Dem. 40.11 and Isae. 12.9, both cited in Parker, *Polytheism* 436 and n.75.

<sup>54</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 18.1–2 and 22.4. In light of this tradition, an epiphany of Apollo Delphinios during Theseus’ Cretan journey would have been quite apposite and, perhaps, even expected by the audience. On Apollo Delphinios and the Pyanopsia see Calame, *Choruses* 125–128; Tsagalis, in *Apolline Politics* 210. Cf. Shapiro, *MeditHistRev* 7 (1992) 37–38, and E. Simon, “Theseus and Athenian Festivals,” in J. Neils (ed.), *Worshipping Athena, Panathenaia and Parthenon* (Madison 1996) 9–23.

myths which associate Theseus with Delphinios, all of which are attested to in the later sources, it is reasonable to link them with Theseus' rise as an Athenian national hero and, therefore, to place them during the end of the sixth century or the beginning of the fifth.<sup>55</sup> The rising importance of Apollo Delphinios during this period also seems to be verified by a number of contemporary Athenian vases, which depict Apollo either riding a dolphin or accompanied by a pod of dolphins.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, whereas in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* Apollo's plunge into the sea in the shape of a dolphin does not result in his visiting the halls of Poseidon, it is likely that such a *variatio* was in circulation. This, at least, can be deduced from an Attic neck amphora dated ca. 520.<sup>57</sup> The scene depicted takes place underwater; Amphitrite and Poseidon stand on the right, Hermes and a female figure on the left, while in the middle is Apollo, dressed in his fine cloak and playing the lyre. Kaempf-Dimitriadou<sup>58</sup> associates the scene with the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*, which is quite possible. Indeed, if there had been such a variant of the story, then this would have functioned as yet another link between Theseus' plunge in Ode 17 and Apollo's in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*.

On the grounds of all of the above, whereas at first glance the thematic/semantic parallels between the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* and Ode 17 may seem circumstantial and topical, it would be legitimate to argue that Delphinios' centrality in the religious and civic life of the Ionians/Athenians and in the biography of Theseus, in conjunction with the performance venue, would have sufficed to mobilize the allusions to the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*, at

<sup>55</sup> See e.g. Bourboulis, *Apollo Delphinios* 39 ff.

<sup>56</sup> Shapiro, *Art and Cult* 61, on an unpublished amphora in Sydney; E. Simon, *Die Götter der Griechen* (Munich 1985) 140–141, on a hydria by the Berlin Painter; see also W. Lambrinudakis, "Apollo," *LIMC* II.1 (1984) 227–233, nos. 342, 379, 382. All vases are dated around 480.

<sup>57</sup> British Museum B. 262; S. Kaempf-Dimitriadou, "Amphitrite," *LIMC* I.1 (1981) 728, no. 48.

<sup>58</sup> *LIMC* I.1 732.



least for the biggest part of the audience.<sup>59</sup> In such a case, the passing reference to the dolphins that convey Theseus to the halls of Poseidon would most likely have been construed as a manifestation of Apollo *sub aliena specie*, while the whole episode would have been interpreted through the spectrum of the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* and understood as etiological in character—but etiological for what?

*The paean of the Athenians*

Perhaps the most obvious and spontaneous response to this question would be that, just as the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* credits the establishment of Apollo's temple and cult at Delphi to the Cretans, so Ode 17 attributes the foundation of choral performances on Delos to the Athenians.<sup>60</sup> This is in fact the thesis of a number of scholars, at least so far as the cultural axis of the poem is concerned.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, the staging of the dispute between Minos and Theseus on a Cretan ship, the never-retrieved ring of Minos, Apollo's unmistakable predilection for the Athenians at the expense of his Delphic minstrels, and the paean which is here triumphantly sung by the Athenians, all work together to imply that Bacchylides' intention was not merely to provide a counterpart to the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*, but also, and most importantly, to challenge the older and well-established poem by contriving a competing version.

One possibility could be that Bacchylides opts to override the etiology of the Cretan origin of the paean-cry and usurp it in behalf of the Athenians. Otherwise put, he models his song on

<sup>59</sup> Even if one is reluctant to take these allusions as authorial, the apparent similarities between the two poems and the audience's familiarity with Delphinios would suffice for the connection to be made at the level of reception.

<sup>60</sup> It is significant that, whereas at the beginning of the poem Theseus' comrades are identified merely as Ionians (κούρους Ἰαόνων), at 92–93 they are specified as Athenians (Ἀθηναίων ἠϊθέων ... γένος).

<sup>61</sup> Calame, in *Apolline Poetics* 175; Käppel, *Paian* 160–161, 187; Fearn, *Bacchylides* 247–255. Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans* 29 n.26, makes a similar point in a footnote but does not pursue the matter further.

the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* only to polemically refigure it. While not a solidly arguable statement, it is a plausible hypothesis. For there also existed an Athenian etiology for the paeon-cry. An intriguing tradition is attested by Macrobius (*Sat.* 1.17.18): the paeon-cry was the exhortation given by the Delphic oracle to the Athenians before Theseus' encounter with the Amazons.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, in a Hellenistic paeon attributed to Limenius it is explicitly stated that the paeon-cry was first exclaimed by the Athenians, when Apollo passed through Attica *en route* to Delphi.<sup>63</sup> Apparently, these traditions seek to pre-empt the dominant Cretan and Delphic etiologies for the ritual paeon-cry and Delphinios' close association with Delphi.<sup>64</sup> In a similar vein is the clearly pro-Athenian *variatio* attested by Photius, which ascribes the establishment of Athens' Delphinion to the Cretan sailors whom Apollo Delphinios saved from death and brought to Attica (not Delphi!).<sup>65</sup> Finally, we have Callimachus fr.229 on Branchus: even though here Delphinios is not associated with Athens, it is noteworthy that he is represented as going straight from his birthplace to Miletus, by-passing Delphi.<sup>66</sup>

To be sure, these etiologies are quite late, and it is impossible to ascertain whether they were in circulation at the beginning of the fifth century. But the Athenians' attempt to forge strong ties with Apollo and his cult, and, by extension, to exercise 'ideological control' upon his eminent oracle at Delphi, can be

<sup>62</sup> See I. Rutherford, "Neoptolemus and the Paeon Cry: An Echo of a Sacred Aetiology in Pindar," *ZPE* 88 (1991) 1–10, at 9 n.45.

<sup>63</sup> Powell, *Coll. Alex.* 149–150. See M. Fantuzzi, "Sung Poetry: The Case of Inscribed Paeans," in J. J. Clauss and M. Cuypers (eds.), *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature* (Chichester 2010) 181–196, at 192–194.

<sup>64</sup> On the Delphic etiology of the paeon-cry see Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans* 24–26, and *ZPE* 88 (1991) 1.

<sup>65</sup> Phot. *Lex.* E 1522. I would like to thank the *GRBS* reader for bringing this reference to my attention.

<sup>66</sup> Call. fr.229.12–13: εἴλαθι, Δελφίῳ ἄ[ν]αξ οὖν[ο]μα γάρ[ρ] τοι τόδ' ἐγὼ κατάρχω / [εἶνεκεν Οἰκούσ]ιον εἰς ἄ[σ]τυ σε δελφίς ἀπ' ἔβησε Δήλου.

traced back to this very period. In Aeschylus' *Eumenides* the Pythia herself attests that on his way from Delos to Delphi Apollo passed through "the ship-frequented shores of Pallas," a detail which is obviously at odds with the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*, according to which the god in coming to Delphi by-passes Athens entirely (9–14).<sup>67</sup>

λιπὼν δὲ λίμνην Δηλίαν τε χοιράδα,  
 κέλσας ἐπ' ἄκτας ναυπόρους τὰς Παλλάδος,  
 ἐς τήνδε γαίαν ἦλθε Παρνησοῦ θ' ἔδρας.  
 πέμπουσι δ' αὐτὸν καὶ σεβίζουσιν μέγα  
 κελευθοποιοὶ παῖδες Ἡφαίστου, χθόνα  
 ἀνήμερον τιθέντες ἡμερωμένην.

Despite this evidence, however, I am quite skeptical that ode 17 aims to claim priority over competing instances for the paean-cry. First of all, unlike the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*, the Ode eschews explicit reference to the musical instrument and lacks the quotation of the ritual cry. Second, the compression of the episode of Theseus' plunge indicates belief in an already estab-

<sup>67</sup> This detail was "invented in order to give special honour to Athens": A. J. Podlecki, *Aeschylus: Eumenides* (Warminster 1989) 130, citing schol. *Eum.* 11. The "builders of roads" in the passage have been identified as the Athenians, who are here presented as civilizing the ground over which Apollo will go to Delphi. Apart from presenting Athens as a place of fertility and civilization, the passage, as A. M. Bowie observes ("Religion and Politics in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*," *CQ* 43 [1993] 10–31), conjures up the impression that the role played by the Athenians is even more important than that of the Delphians "in that all the latter have to do is to welcome the god, whose arrival has been made possible by the Athenians" (15–16). Cf. M. R. Vamvouri, *La Fabrique du Divin. Les Hymnes de Callimaque à la lumière des Hymnes homériques et des Hymnes épigraphiques* (Liège 2004) 200–206: Dionysus' introduction to Delphi a century later was "une certaine politique étrangère d'Athènes à Delphes" (200). On the cult of Dionysus at Delphi, the new temple, and the paean of Philodamos see J. Strauss Clay, "Fusing the Boundaries. Apollo and Dionysus at Delphi," *Métis* 11 (1996) 83–100; A. Stewart, "Dionysos at Delphi: The Pediments of the Sixth Temple of Apollo and Religious Reform in the Age of Alexander," in B. Barr-Sharrar and E. N. Borza (eds.), *Macedonia and Greece in Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Times* (Washington 1982) 205–227.

lished practice of paean-singing. Accordingly, I would make a somewhat different suggestion, that Ode 17 was not intended to be etiological for the paean *per se* but rather for the reform of what must have been ubiquitously considered the standard and traditional paean.

A plausible objection to this proposition could be that Ode 17 does not contain any hints at, or references to, the newness of the Athenians' song which would allow us to reach such a conclusion. Reasonable though this reservation may be, I would counterpose that Ode 17 is actually 'performative' of the reformed paean for which it provides the etiology. In other words, its very own formal features and choreographic execution epitomize the characteristics of the new paean which it credits to the Athenians.

At the opening of the paper I touched upon the dilemma of the ode's generic taxonomy, paean or dithyramb, and the lack of scholarly consensus on the matter. This difficulty arises from the fact that Ode 17 contains elements which do not adhere to the typology of the paean. The most striking diversions are its narrative mode and dramatic character, features rather distinctive of the dithyramb. The closing prayer to Apollo (εἶη μοι κίθαρίς τε φίλη, κτλ., 130–132) must also be cited, in so far as it conjures up the impression that the ode was sung in a musical contest.<sup>68</sup>

It is reasonable to surmise that, apart from its form and structure, the generic classification of a poem by the audience would have depended also on its musical and choral execution. This aspect however has not received adequate scholarly attention. Nothing is left of the music and choreography of Ode 17. Nonetheless, it has been proposed that the poem provides an *aition* for the *geranos* dance<sup>69</sup> which Theseus, along with the

<sup>68</sup> On the dithyrambic elements of the poem see Schmidt, *Hermes* 118 (1990) 26–28; Tsagalis, in *Apolline Poetics* 201–207. On the formal features of the paean in general see Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans* 68–82. The extant evidence for contests of paeans is scant, see Schmidt 20–21.

<sup>69</sup> On the dance see B. L. Lawler, "The Geranos Dance. A New Interpre-

Athenian youths, danced on Delos after their fortunate departure from Crete, and that the Cean chorus most likely performed this very dance, or a similar one (a *kuklios choros*)—a thesis which I find attractive and convincing.<sup>70</sup>

Our knowledge of the *geranos* is regrettably scarce, and we know hardly anything about its choreography. Yet, from what can be gleaned from our extant sources, the *geranos*:

(a) must have been a circular dance, that is, a dance performed around the altar.<sup>71</sup>

(b) was mimetic: it imitated the windings of the labyrinth and, as Plutarch puts it, had ἀνελίξεις καὶ παραλλάξεις. This feature brings in the imagery of weaving and this is what the scholiast most likely had in mind when he notes that Theseus ἔπλεκεν (“wove/contrived”) the *geranos* on the basis of the labyrinth’s ἐπιπεπλεγμένας εἰσόδους.<sup>72</sup>

(c) was rapid. We know nothing specific regarding the tempo and pace of the *geranos*: the only evidence comes from Eustathius, who remarks on its rapidity.<sup>73</sup>

This trio of features is striking, as these are traits which one would be more inclined to associate with dithyramb than with paean.<sup>74</sup> If we take as a benchmark the paradigmatic and

tation,” *TAPA* 77 (1946) 112–130; Calame, *Choruses* 53–58; G. Webster, “Labyrinths and Mazes,” in M. Carver (ed.), *In Search of Cult: Archaeological Investigations in Honour of Philip Rahtz* (Woodbridge 1993) 21–35, esp. 28–32.

<sup>70</sup> Käpple, *Paian* 160–161, 187. Fearn, *Bacchylides* 247–255, contends that the ode “mirrors the mythical establishment” of the *geranos* and that the Cean chorus performs a *kuklios choros*. According to him, the *geranos* should be understood as a subgroup of the broader category of the *kuklioi choroi*. On this broad and thorny issue see his detailed and elaborate discussion at 163–225 and 242–256. Opposed to the *geranos* suggestion is Calame, in *Apolline Poetics* 175 n.17; see the discussion below.

<sup>71</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 21.2; Pollux 4.101; Hesych. s.v. Δηλιακὸς βωμός; Callim. *Hymn.* 4.310–315; see also Calame, *Choruses* 53–58.

<sup>72</sup> Schol. *Il.* 18.590 (II 179, IV 202 Dindorf).

<sup>73</sup> Eustathius on *Il.* 18.590 (IV 267 van der Valk).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Plut. *De E apud Delphos* 389A–B, who distinguishes the song of Dionysus, full of passion, change, and confusion, from the orderly and

archetypal paeanic performance described in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*, which is processional, solemn, and slow (very similar to marching),<sup>75</sup> it becomes apparent that the choral execution of Ode 17 is at complete variance with it.<sup>76</sup>

Thus both the form and the choreography of Ode 17 contain elements which pertain to the dithyramb and diverge from what would have been considered intrinsically paeanic. This blurring of boundaries between the paeon and the dithyramb, however, should not be understood as a breakthrough which would have completely and utterly challenged the audience's horizon of expectations. In fact a similar blurring of the boundaries between the Apolline and Dionysiac domain is evidenced in fifth-century Athenian cult and ritual practices,<sup>77</sup> as well as in poetry and art,<sup>78</sup> while traces of it can be detected even on Delos, Apollo's birthplace. For instance, we know that on Delos there were dithyrambic performances. This much can be adduced from a reference to a dithyramb by Simonides which belonged to a collection entitled *Deliaká* (Strab. 15.3.2). A Delian inscription from the fourth century also testifies to the execution of dithyrambs, while a dedicatory inscription from Ceos provides valuable evidence for the existence of dithyrambic competitions in a cult of Apollo on Delos.<sup>79</sup> One cannot help but think also of the Deliades, hailed in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*

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measured song of Apollo.

<sup>75</sup> *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* 514–522. See Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans* 63–64.

<sup>76</sup> Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans* 65, cites evidence for the circular execution of paeans, but interestingly most of this evidence comes from an Athenian or Ionian context. Procession was the most common mode of paeanic performances.

<sup>77</sup> See e.g. P. Wilson, "Performance in the Pythion: The Athenian Thargelia," in P. Wilson (ed.), *The Greek Theatre Festivals* (Oxford 2007) 150–182, at 164–174. Athenian festivities celebrating Theseus were closely connected with both Apollo and Dionysus: see Calame, *Choruses* 127–128, on the Pyanopsia and the Oschophoria.

<sup>78</sup> E.g. Aesch. fr.341. More examples in Clay, *Métis* 11 (1996) 97 n.56.

<sup>79</sup> See Calame, in *Apolline Poetics* 176–177.

for their mimetic abilities (161–164). The mimetic nature of their *choreia* is significant, considering that the Deliades were associated with paean singing.<sup>80</sup> Of particular interest is also a statue of a ‘Dionysiac’ Apollo found on Delos and dated to the Hellenistic period: the god is presented with one foot on a pile of shields (a representation with Delphic overtones) and the Dionysiac *τανία* wrapped around his head.<sup>81</sup>

Given that it is difficult to gauge exactly the degree of this fusion at the time when Ode 17 was performed, one could consider two possible scenarios: that the type of paean exemplified by Ode 17 was quite common in Athens and Delos (and perhaps in other Ionian cities) and the Athenians aspired to usurp it for themselves; or that this was a relatively new type of paean, which the Athenians craved to sanction and promote on Delos.<sup>82</sup> Whatever is the case, either scenario should be understood as part of Athens’ broader attempt to consolidate its hegemonic (political and cultural) aspirations and status.

The suggestion that Ode 17 is etiological for a new or reformed kind of paean seems to be supported by internal evidence as well, in the adjective *νεοκτίτω* which Bacchylides ascribes to the Athenian maidens’ joy: *σὺν εὐθυμίᾳ νεοκτίτω ὠλόλυξαν* (125–127). The adjective, “newly-built” or “newly-founded,” is typically attributed to cities or buildings.<sup>83</sup> To my knowledge, this is the first time that it is used metaphorically to describe something other than a building construction, but this detail has been overlooked, and *σὺν εὐθυμίᾳ νεοκτίτω* is typ-

<sup>80</sup> E.g. Eur. *Her.* 687–690. Whereas our evidence for the professional status of the Deliades comes from the Hellenistic period, references to them in a number of earlier poems (e.g. Sim. *PMG* 519 fr.55 (F103 Poltera), *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* 157, Eur. *Hec.* 462) indicate that they most likely formed a professional group of dancers already in the archaic and classical periods; see Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods* 56–68.

<sup>81</sup> See Stewart, in *Macedonia and Greece* 211 and figs. 8–9.

<sup>82</sup> See Wilson, in *The Greek Theatre* 175–182, for a somewhat similar suggestion, but from a different perspective.

<sup>83</sup> E.g. Pind. *Pyth.* 4.206, *Nem.* 9.4; Hdt. 5.24.4; Thuc. 3.100.2.

ically translated merely as “with new-founded joy.”<sup>84</sup> In my view, the expression rather operates as a *double entendre*; on the one hand, it characterises the joy which replaces the grief that the youths experience when Theseus dives (93–96); on the other, it designates the *novel* way in which the maidens cry out when Theseus re-emerges from the sea.

What should be stressed is that the reform of the paean by Theseus and his comrades proposed here does not take place *in vacuo*. Rather, it should be understood as being inspired and generated by the *choreia* of the Nereids. Even though the ode does not clarify whether the dancing Nereids were also singing, by calling the Athenian maidens ἀγλαόθρονοι, a characterisation more apposite to the Nereids, Bacchylides manages to blur the voices of the two.<sup>85</sup> The *geranos* also seems to be linked with the vibrant divine *choros* of the daughters of Nereus, if we take it that Ode 17 is foundational for this dance. *Prima facie* this claim might seem contradictive (as Calame has pointed out), given that the *geranos* was a dance closely associated with the twists and turns of the Labyrinth and that the episode of Theseus’ dive takes place before the Athenians’ arrival on Crete.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, I would argue that such a temporal (mis)placement of the *geranos* before the arrival on Cretan soil would not have been problematic; on the contrary, it would have further enhanced the praise of Athens.

Theseus’ association with the *geranos* was already established in the sixth century (if indeed the dancing-scene depicted on the François Vase, ca. 570, takes place on Delos).<sup>87</sup> It seems

<sup>84</sup> See Maehler, *Bacchylides* 208 ad 124–125.

<sup>85</sup> The blurring of voices is an established Bacchylidean technique: see D. Cairns, *Bacchylides: Five Epinician Odes* (Cambridge 2010) 48–49, 189–200, 210–211; C. Carey, “Ethos and Pathos in Bacchylides,” in *One Hundred Years* 17–29, at 20; I. L. Pfeijffer, “Pindar and Bacchylides,” in I. J. F. de Jong et al., *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature I* (Leiden 2004) 213–232, at 230–232.

<sup>86</sup> Calame, in *Apolline Poetics* 175 n.17.

<sup>87</sup> Some scholars contend that the dance depicted on the vase was per-



however that other traditions, which closely linked the *geranos* with the Cretans, were also in circulation. For instance, the scholia on the *Iliad* report that this dance was taught to Theseus by Daedalus.<sup>88</sup> This comes as no surprise, given the reputation that the Cretans enjoyed as dancers and Crete's manifold choreographic associations.<sup>89</sup> Yet, by placing the *eureka* moment of the *geranos* before the arrival at Crete and after Theseus' plunge, Bacchylides, in a skillful and masterly way, divests the *geranos* of all its Cretan associations and rather connects it with the divine *choros* that Theseus experiences in the depths of the sea.<sup>90</sup>

The Nereids' dancing vignette has not received much scholarly attention. But if we compare their dance with what is known about the *geranos*, it becomes evident that the two dances share a number of features, and this bolsters the proposition that Bacchylides wanted to ascribe a divine origin to the *geranos* and present this dance as a genuinely Athenian invention:

(a) Ode 17 does not specify whether the Nereids are performing a circular dance. However, there is abundant evidence that the Nereids were *always* associated with circular dances and, more particularly, with Dionysiac dance.<sup>91</sup>

(b) A prominent feature of the Bacchylidean description is the

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formed in Crete, just after the killing of the Minotaur. On the issue see Calame, *Choruses* 54 and n.138. Cf. Shapiro, in *New Perspectives* 124, who holds that the scene represents Theseus' arrival on Crete and his first encounter with Ariadne.

<sup>88</sup> Schol. *Il.* 18.590; Eustath. *Il.* 18.590–605. In fact, Eustathius ventures to add that Daedalus did not teach the dance to Theseus, but to Ariadne: οὐ τῷ Θησεῖ τῷ ἀλλοδαπῷ τὸν χορὸν ἐκείνον ὁ ἐκ Κρήτης Δαίδαλος ἤσκησεν, ἀλλὰ τῇ τῶν βασιλέων θυγατρὶ Ἀριάδνῃ τῇ τοῦ Θησεύος ἐρωμένη (IV 268).

<sup>89</sup> Lonsdale, *Dance* 23, 86, 140, 150, 157.

<sup>90</sup> This need not mean that Bacchylides strips the *geranos* of all its associations with the Labyrinth, but rather that he also associates it with a divine origin.

<sup>91</sup> See Csapo, in *Poetry* 69–98; Barringer, *Divine Escorts* 78–80, 141–151. According to her, from the mid-sixth century onwards one can detect an assimilation of the Nereids to the nymphs/maenads who follow Dionysus.

great emphasis laid upon the dazzling light which covers the limbs of the dancing Nereids (101–107):

τόθι κλυτὰς ἰδὼν  
 ἔδεισε<v> Νηρήος ὀλ-  
 βίου κόρας· ἀπὸ γὰρ ἀγλα-  
 ῶν λάμπε γυίων σέλας  
 ὥτε πυρός, ἀμφὶ χαίταις  
 δὲ χρυσεόπλοκοι  
 δίνηντο ταινίαι·

As Peponi has convincingly argued, apart from indicating divine presence, the luminosity that characterises many dancing scenes could also be related to the perception of quickness. Rapid movement blurs boundaries and shapes, and ultimately transform the moving bodies into different substances and pure light.<sup>92</sup> The rapid movement implied in the light imagery of the description also finds support in the use of the verb δίνηντο, which Bacchylides employs to indicate the lively motion of the Nereids' hair-ribbons (another Dionysiac feature).<sup>93</sup>

(c) Unfortunately, Ode 17 does not specify whether the Nereids' dance was mimetic in a particular way. It is notable, however, that the imagery of weaving, which was associated with the *geranos* by the scholiasts, comes twice to the fore in an indirect way, through the compound adjectives ἰόπλοκοι (37) and χρυσεόπλοκοι (106) applied to the Nereids.<sup>94</sup> Stretched though this might be, I would argue that these two adjectives, despite being conventional, are also used metonymically in order to indicate the 'intricate' nature of the Nereids' *choros*.

<sup>92</sup> A.-E. Peponi, "Wrestling Time: Quickness and its Aesthetic," unpublished paper delivered at the Colloquium on Temporalities, UCLA, April 2004.

<sup>93</sup> For a possible representation of these ribbons see *LICM* VI.2 s.v. "Nereids" no. 339.

<sup>94</sup> Note that the wreath bestowed on Theseus by Amphitrite is also called πλόκον (114).

*Conclusion*

Scholars have long recognized the political and cultural etiological tinge and ramifications of Ode 17. The poem has been variously interpreted as legitimizing Athens' aspirations to tower over the Aegean through its emphasis upon Theseus and his parentage as son of Poseidon, as well as providing an *aition* for the *geranos* dance/Delian *choreia*. My reading of Ode 17 through the spectrum of the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* bolsters and further enhances both these views. On a primary level it helps us to unpack and explicate some of the particularities which lend the poem its distinctive character. One could include here Poseidon's conspicuous absence from the underwater scene (Bacchylides had to downplay Poseidon's role in order to put Apollo Delphinios in the spotlight), the emphasis laid upon the dancing Nereids (the poet had to associate Theseus' experience with some sort of divine music and dance in order to make his point clearer), and the episode's incorporation into the Cretan adventure, if indeed Bacchylides is to be held responsible for this innovation.

On a second level this approach serves to unveil some of the poem's more complicated and agonistic aspects which have hitherto remained concealed. By modeling his song on the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* Bacchylides infuses it with the authority of the oldest and more elaborate account of Apollo's epiphany, and puts it on a par with the hymn; Ode 17 exhibits the pretension to be for Delos what the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* was for Delphi. Yet Ode 17 was not intended as a counterpart to the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* Bacchylides ingeniously sets up a scene whose aim is not merely to imitate, but rather to rival, the encounter between Delphinios and the Cretans in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.*. Here the very same god, who in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* chooses the Cretans and their chant to be his Delphic minstrels and cult song respectively, shows a clear predilection for the Athenians, who, in their turn, are presented singing and, in projection, dancing

a paean.<sup>95</sup> Apollo's ostentatious preference for the Athenians in the story is of paramount importance, as it enables Bacchylides to subtly divest the Cretans of their role as the god's minstrels *par excellence* and bestow it on the Athenians, who, inspired by the divine *choreia* of the Nereids, reform and renew the god's traditional song.

The implications of the cluster of associations identified here are important and involve fifth-century historical and geo-political realities. In antiquity Delos prevailed as one of the two main religious centers of Apollo, the other being Delphi. From very early on, various cities dispatched choruses to the island as part of pilgrimage (*theoria*), and our evidence testifies to a very large worshipping community revolving around it.<sup>96</sup> The Athenians' predilection for Delos as the centre of the Delian League in 477 was not, therefore, a random choice. It was carefully thought out and politically motivated, as this would allow Athens to establish itself as the cultural leader of the sanctuary's catchment area in a much easier and unprovocative way.<sup>97</sup> The potential political implications of control of Delos were in fact recognised by the Athenians much earlier, and Peisistratus' purification of the island in the sixth century should be placed within this framework.<sup>98</sup>

After the Persian Wars the timing was perfect for a new and

<sup>95</sup> Theseus' wreath and fine cloak bring to mind the image of a *choregos* and implicitly allude to the *choros* that Theseus and his Athenian comrades would subsequently dance on Delos, after their escape from Crete; see Fearn, *Bacchylides* 255.

<sup>96</sup> Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods* 81–83.

<sup>97</sup> The Athenians seem to have valued their association with Delos and the Delian festival. As Kowalzig points out, *Singing for the Gods* 92, the word ῥήθεοι that Bacchylides assigns to the young Athenians was normally used to label the Athenian chorus sent to Delos. Also, the ship that the Athenians sent to Delos for their *theoria* was alleged to be Theseus' ship: see Parker, *Polytheism* 81.

<sup>98</sup> See Constantakopoulou, *The Dance of the Islands* 61–89; Shapiro, *Art and Cult* 49.

more dynamic manoeuvre, not least because of the recent destruction of Miletus, the long-standing religious centre of the Ionians. Throughout the sixth century Miletus was considered the greatest of Greek cities and surpassed even Athens and Sparta in wealth and prosperity. Its destruction in 490 cleared the way for Athens to take over. Bacchylides' clever incorporation of Apollo Delphinios into the story of Theseus' plunge (a god whose worship was paramount in Miletus and the Ionian world) and the presentation of the Athenians as his chosen people for the establishment of Delian *choreia* and the reform of his song could be taken collectively as symbolising the transfer of the Ionian cultural centre from Miletus to Delos under the leadership of Athens. In doing so Bacchylides both legitimizes the Athenians' aspirations to preside over the Delian religious *communitas* and enhances their public image as the rightful overseers of Apollo's Delian cult.<sup>99</sup>

The ode also seems to have wider and more far-reaching overtones which transcend the 'epichoric' boundaries of this Delian *communitas*. First, the credit that the Athenians receive for developing the paradigmatic paean of the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* allows them to impress their authority upon Apollo's song outside of Delos as well. The inclusion of Delphinios in the story, a god closely connected with Delphi, could also be comprehended as part of Athens' ideological expansionism in the wake of the Persian Wars.

Consequently, in Ode 17 the Athenians emerge not merely as the new legitimate political and economic leaders of the Aegean, but also as the sanctioned cultural leaders of the Ionians, and as the reformers of Apollo's panhellenic cult song. One wonders whether the Athenians' appropriation of the political, economic, and cultural primacy of the Cretans, as is symbolically manifested in the poem, could be emblemized in the ring (κόσμος) which Minos throws into the sea and which is

<sup>99</sup> Enlightening in this respect is Thuc. 1.95: after the destruction of Miletus the Ionians resorted to the Athenians and requested them, appealing to their kinship ties, to become their leaders.

never retrieved. In Crete the word κόσμος designated the chief magistrates of city-states, whose power was thought equivalent to that of the Spartan ephors.<sup>100</sup> Seen from this angle, the throwing of the ring and its non-retrieval seem to symbolize the shift of political/economic power and authority from the Cretans (their thalassocracy) to the Athenians. At the same time, though, κόσμος is a term which could also be easily associated with Apollo's song, characterised as it was by harmony and order.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 1272a 4–8; J. E. Fontenrose, *Didyma: Apollo's Oracle, Cult, and Companions* (Berkeley/London 1988) 60–61.

<sup>101</sup> In the *Hymn.Hom.Merc.* Apollo is twice said to have spoken/sung κατὰ κόσμον (433, 479).

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